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ABSTRACT

At pre-primary and primary levels in Mexico there are 50,000 schools, where English is not required. There are about 3,000 bilingual private English/Spanish schools, but no overall standards apply for the English program. At the secundaria (junior high) level, 2.200,000 students attend 6,500 schools, and are required to study English or French three hours a week for three years. About 95 percent study English. There are 10,000 English teachers at this level, and classes have over 50 students. Private schools have a more extended program and smaller classes. Private commercial and technical academies teach business or technical English, but there is no program coordination. An inservice training program was instituted recently to train English teachers all over the country. At present only 10 percent have had teacher training courses. A television program broadcasts secundaria-level programs, including English. At the preparatoria or high school level, there are about 50,000 students, and schools have no coordination of English programs. At university level, each school has its own program, and many have foreign language centers. Numerous private institutions and bicultural centers offer English courses to adults. (CHK)

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AN OVERALL VIEW OF ENGLISH IN MEXICO

It is estimated that there are about three million students in both private and government schools and colleges in Mexico.

At the pre-primary and primary levels (what is known as Educación Elemental) there are 50,000 schools. English is not required by the Ministry of Education in the public school system for the primary grades. However, there are many bi-lingual private schools (about 3,000) which teach either British or American English as a medium of instruction along with the required Spanish program. In these bi-lingual schools the syllabus and the materials used vary considerably as do the standards of instruction and the educational background of the teachers. There is an association of bi-lingual schools, but no standards have been set up for the English program. The primary school English teacher is paid 25%-35% more than the primary school Spanish teacher.

At the secondary level (Educación Media Básica), which is equivalent to our Junior High Schools in the United States, there are about 2,200,000 students and 6,500 schools. The students in "secundaria" are required to study a foreign language (be it French or English) for three hours a week for three years. About 95% of the student body study English as a foreign language and about 5% study French when it is offered. French is usually not offered in the public schools outside of Mexico City. There are about 10,000 teachers of English at this level

and classes run anywhere from 50 to 60 students in one class in the public day schools and from 50 to 90 in the evening classes. Private schools at the "secundaria" level have a more extended English program running from about 8 to 10 hours per week with 20-25 students in a class. Many of the so-called commercial academies, which aren't under the government program, place a great deal of emphasis on Commercial English to train bi-lingual secretaries. Teachers in these academies are very deficient in English and in their preparation as teachers. Up to the present there is no coordination in the English syllabus in the government schools. The "technical secundarias" teach what they call "technical English" -- i.e. they use any text and tailor the vocabulary to the specific needs of their students. For example, if a student is studying mechanical engineering, or electronics, he will learn the technical vocabulary he needs. The Ministry of Education is in the process of changing this system and hopefully by 1976 there will be one, common, coordinated syllabus for English as a foreign language in all the government "secundarias". At the beginning of this year an "in-service refresher course" for training teachers of English in the "secundarias" was initiated with a pilot group of 66 teachers. These teachers (called "multipliers") meet in Mexico City on Saturday mornings for a special training course. In July and August these "multipliers" will go out to the main cities in the provinces and train 50 to 60 teachers who in turn will go into the smaller towns and villages and train other teachers. At present only about 10% of the teachers in the

"secundarias" have had any teacher-training courses. A few have graduated from the Escuela Normal Superior (about an average of 15 graduates per year over the last 25 years), some from the National University of Mexico (about 5 graduates per year who actually enter the profession and then only at the "preparatoria" level), and the majority of the teachers who are mostly "secundaria" graduates themselves have taken an 8-month to a year teacher-training course either at the Mexican North American Cultural Institute (a Bi-national center) or at the Anglo-Mexican Institute (a British-sponsored center). The Ministry of Education provides a fairly wide list of recommended texts (British and American) that can be used, but in each school it is usually the head of the English Department who selects the texts he prefers. The "secundaria" teachers earn about $6,000 pesos a month (roughly US$500 dollars) for an average of 30 sessions.

The Ministry of Education also promotes a "tele-secundaria" which is broadcasted from Mexico City on Channel 5 every morning. "Tele aulas" are set up in rural and urban areas to provide a complete program, including English, for the "secundaria" level. A 50-minute lesson is televised in 20 minutes and then 25-30 minutes are spent with a coordinator, who in most cases is really a primary school teacher. These classes are given to young people and adults alike who cannot attend regular classes, or in areas where no schools exist.

At the "preparatoria" level (Educación Media Superior), which is equivalent to our high schools in the United States, there are roughly

half a million students. About one-fourth of these students are in schools that depend on the National University of Mexico and about one-fourth are in private and government schools. There is a tremendous diversity in the types of English offered and there is no coordination in the syllabus -- not even within the same school! (There is complete freedom and chaos !) Students who have studied English for three years in "secundaria" usually have to begin all over again and take three more years of English in "preparatoria" and, when they go on to the University, they may have to take a beginning course in English again. There is no coordination from the "secundaria" level to the "preparatoria" level nor from the "preparatoria" level to the university. In order to teach at the "preparatorias" which are under the university's jurisdiction, a teacher must present his teacher's training certificate before he is allowed to take the teacher's exam at the National University.

At the university level (Educación Superior), many universities have their own centers for foreign languages (CELE at the National University of Mexico and CENLEX at the Polytechnical University). Again, each university has its own program. The National University offers a college degree in "Letras Inglesas" (English language and literature) for those who either want to 1) teach English, or 2) be professional translators or 3) work in research or literary criticism. At present there are 322 students in this program. The Universidad Iberoamericana and the Universidad Anahuac offer a two-year teacher-

training course. The University of the Americas (a member of the Southern Association of Colleges and American Universities) offers a B.A. in general education and in TESOL, and an M.A. in TESOL (Inter-cultural Education or Specialized Education). The New International University offers courses in English literature and grammar.

There are numerous private institutions which offer English to adults. The Mexican North American Cultural Institute in Mexico City has more than 8,000 students studying English as a foreign language and a staff of about 65 teachers. There are 15 bi-national centers scattered throughout Mexico with a total of around 15,262 students. The Anglo-Mexican Institute has 9,000 students in Mexico City, and 2,500 in Guadalajara with a total of 140 teachers. These institutes offer basic and advanced courses plus teacher-training courses. Many, many private institutes and centers exist in Mexico City and in the provinces. These schools use the texts and methods from either the American or British Institutes. There are also schools such as Berlitz, Ecco-Phone, Cenlemex, Coronet Hall and Mexico City Center, which offer total immersion or intensive English courses with various texts and methods.

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